

# HIMALAYAN TIMES

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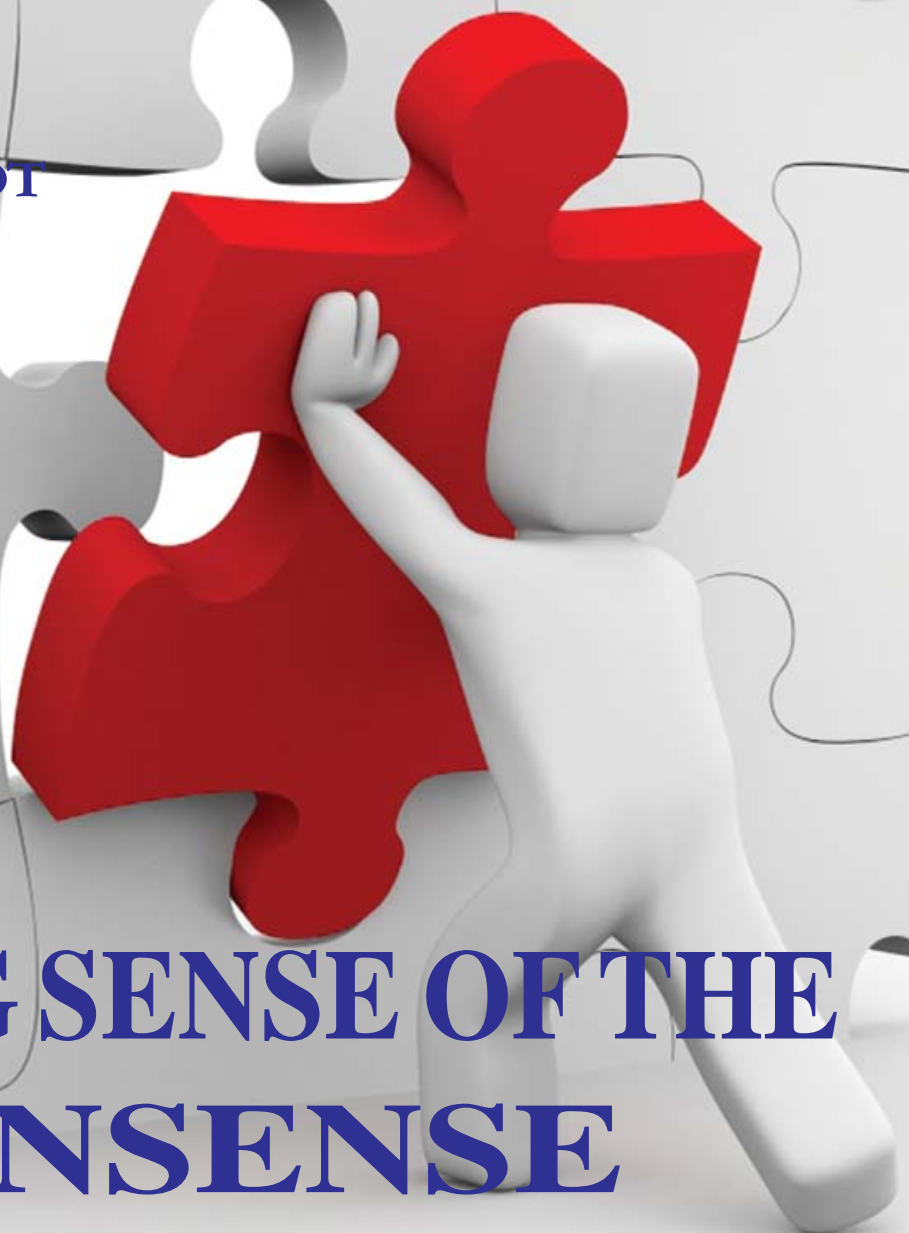
**KALIMPONG'S  
UNTOLD STORY**

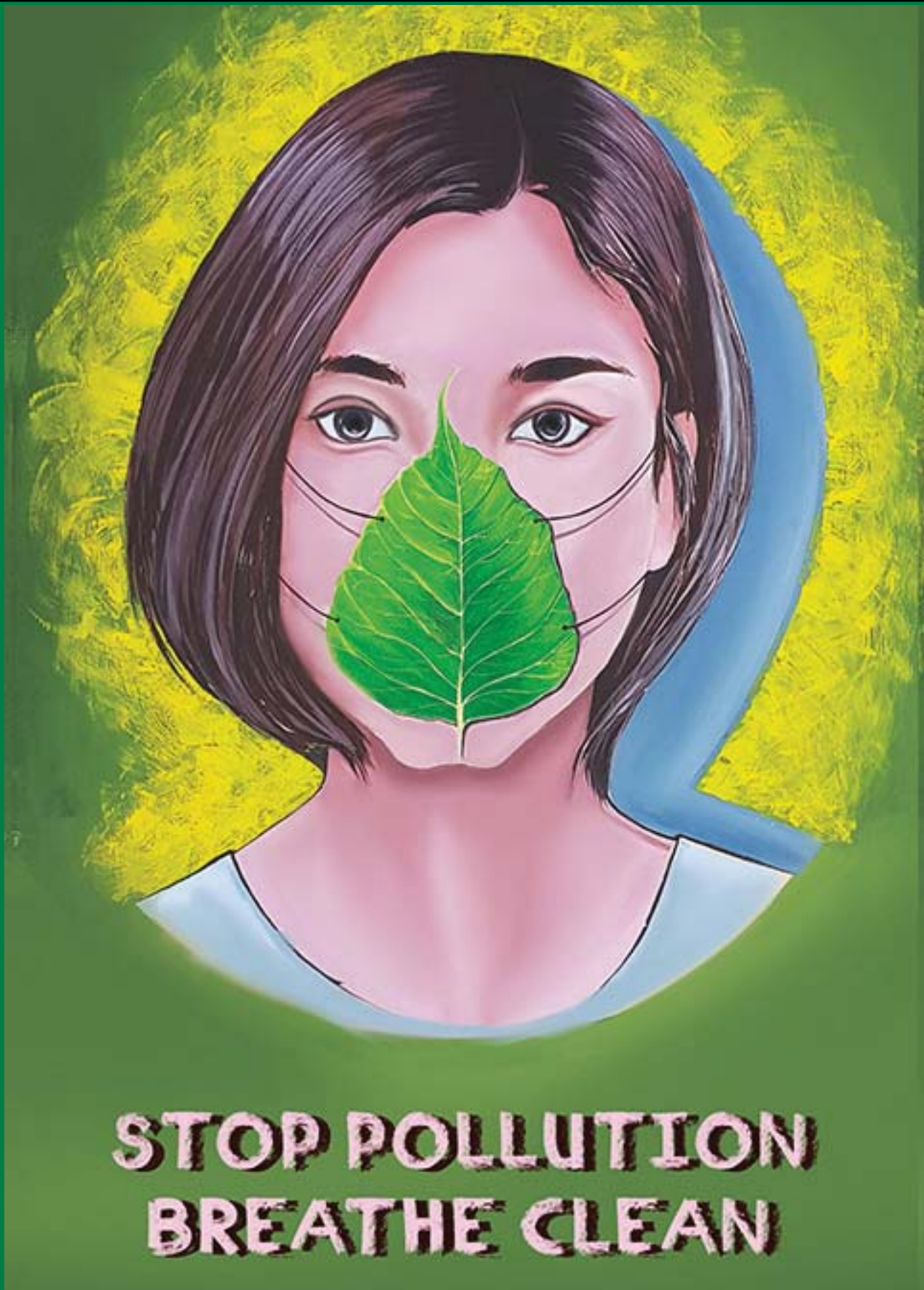
**A FADING SNAPSHOT**

**TEESTA WEEPS..**

**10 QUESTIONS  
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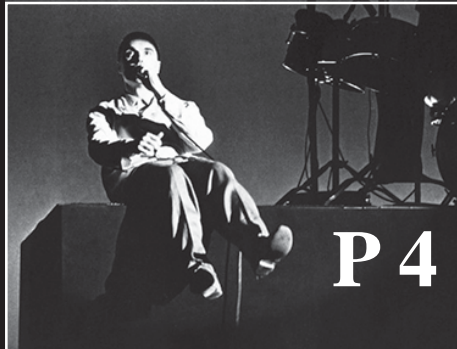
**MAKING SENSE OF THE  
NONSENSE**







### MAKING SENSE OF THE NONSENSE



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A year after the 104 days of strikes, Sandip C. Jain tries to find some sense in it....

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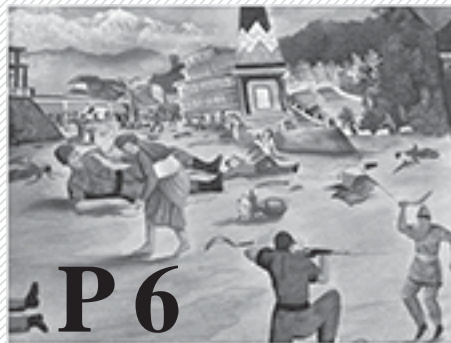
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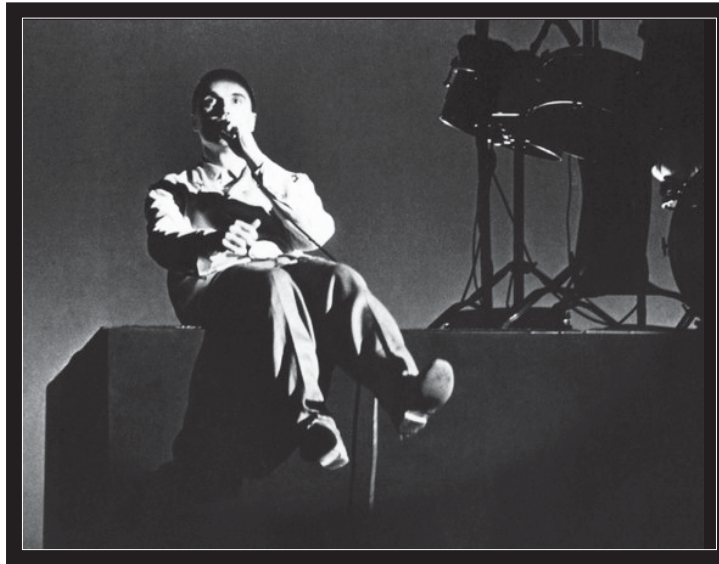
## Cover Story

MAKING SENSE OF  
THE NONSENSE

One of the best quotes of **Carl Gustav Jung**, the great Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who founded analytical psychology was- "*The pendulum of the mind alternates between sense and nonsense, not between right and wrong*".

He probably had us in mind when he said the above line. Almost all of us living in the Darjeeling Hills, most of the time, never let the pendulum of our minds alternate between what is right and what is wrong. Our mental pendulum, mostly, swings between sense and nonsense and many a times, between one nonsense and another nonsense.

How else can we explain the 104 day long strikes by anything else but by calling it nonsense? Desperately wanting to make some sense out of the 104 days that were lost but having failed to make any, my mind, like Gustav says, alternates between sense and nonsense. Out of 8736 hours that constitute a year 2496 hours were lost. It's a staggering 28.57% of an entire year that we lost doing nothing other than indulging in nonsense. Now if the so called, sensible people like you and me spend our time indulging in nonsense and nonsensical people lead us to believe that the nonsense that we are indulging in actually makes sense, then after a while the pendulum of our minds starts swinging between sense and nonsense and not between right and wrong- just as Carl Gustav Jung said.



Had our minds really swung between right and wrong, we would not have allowed 28.57% of this year go to waste over nothing. In a time and age where time is money, all we did in these 2496 hours was to speculate whether the next meal would be **Eskush ko muntha** (Squash tendrils) or **Pharsi ko muntha** (Pumkin tendrils). Of course the experts amongst us also made

their lengthy researches during these long 2496 hours and told us that after 90 days of strikes, the Central Government would intervene and that Presidents Rule would be imposed in the Darjeeling Area after that. They also made further researches and told us that after 120 days of strikes the United Nations would directly intervene on our behalf. Unfortunately for us, we couldn't reach the 120 days mark and the United Nations sadly could not intercede on our behalf. I wonder where these intellects got their research materials from... or maybe the pendulums of their minds were swinging at a wave length far beyond the understanding of lowly writers like me.

We live in a world and time where one take into consideration "Cost and benefit" before one indulges in anything. The world we live in has actually reached a point where many even think of "Cost and benefit" before making new friends. Return on investment is the new mantra of the times we live in. So to ask what was the "Returns" on the "Investment" of 104 days that the Hills made is a logical question that we must ask the leaders who made us eat **Eskush ko muntha or Parsi ko muntha**, for so many consecutive days. In fact the **muntha** business had

become so severe for most of us during the latter half of the 104 days that the pendulum of our minds actually started to swing between ***Eskush ko muntha and Parsi ko muntha.***

Since most of those reading this piece will be Indians (although this piece will also be carried by a leading newspaper in Kathmandu) I presume most will understand this Hindi proverb –

***khoda pahar niklee chueia*** – how true it is in the case of the 104 days strikes. The fact is that the Return on the Investment of 104 days that the Hills of Darjeeling made was a big fat zero. Rather we lost out on all fronts- education, tourism, general business etc as well as everything else went for a toss. The Hill students will have to slog it out in the bitter cold of December and January just to cover up their school syllabus. The Tourism Industry still is facing zero bookings at a time generally considered the peak season. General Business and trading is still at 50-60% of what it should be. And the greatest loser of them all was the issue of Gorkhaland.

The 104 day strikes actually did more harm to the statehood demand than probably anything ever before. It has been exactly a hundred years and 45 days since the Hillmen's Association submitted that historical memorandum to The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal (on 08.11.1917) petitioning him for the creation of a separate administrative unit for this Hill region and since then this demand has had its ups and downs but never in my opinion has it been as down as it is now after this disastrous 104 days. The demand has lost a lot of credibility in the eyes of the world beyond these Hills and the leaders of this movement stand discredited and maligned in every eye. Any leadership that denies the rights of the daily wage earners to make a living, any leadership which forces its children not to go to school, any leadership which curtails the rights of its citizens not to earn sufficiently so as to look after his family, any leadership which cannot control its supporters from smashing up ambulances carrying the sick

or vehicles transporting essential commodities and most of all, any leadership which sacrifices the lives of nine innocents for the sake of its own gains ought to be condemned which the world has rightly done so.


It would not be wrong an assessment if I said that the leadership of the Darjeeling Hills has failed not just its otherwise peaceful and patriotic citizens but also the

demand for a separate state. Their bluff needs to be called. My understanding of the situation is that the strike initially was called not in support of a separate state but because the Police raided the GJM party Office. Later to gain public support somehow somewhere the strikes were suddenly twisted into becoming one for a separate state. What if the Police had not raided the GJM party office or what if the West Bengal

Government hadn't come up with the sensitive issue of imposing Bengali as a compulsory/alternative language across the state? What if the GJM run GTA hadn't been on its last days when all these were taking place? Would they still have called the indefinite strikes? Well your guess is as good as mine.

The fact being pointed out by the above is that even the initial calling of the ill-fated 104 days was not done in sincerity. When the beginning of it was so inauspicious and hypocritical how could the result of it all be successful then? It actually was domed from the very day the day it commenced. Yet the public supported the entire nonsense that happened- once again proving what the great **Carl Gustav Jung** had said.

It really is high time now that we prove **Carl Gustav Jung** wrong and reset the pendulum of our minds to swing between right and wrong rather than between sense and non sense.

Once we do this maybe then the Hills of Darjeeling could hope to have a foothold in the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. 





Janice Mukhia

# KALIMPONG'S UNTOLD STORY



If ever there was a point in our past that changed the fabric of our entire community, I would have to flip the calendar to lay a finger on Sunday, the 27th of July, 1986.

Indeed, that is a day that will go down in the annals of Kalimpong history as “Our” Black Sunday. It is a day that continues to live in infamy, for in that tragic moment we all turned a corner and underwent a complete transformation. Quite unknowingly we bid farewell to our in-borne innocence and inherited, what some have quite candidly labelled as, the “Inheritance of Loss”. We undoubtedly inherited a great loss, the burden of which we carry to this day.

It did not all start out that way, or rather no one had quite envisioned the tragedy and atrocity that that day would bring upon us.

It was a bright, hot summer day in late July. The Gorkhaland agitation—the demand for a separate state for thousands of Nepalese living in Darjeeling and its sub-division—had gripped the hills. Every man, woman and child’s interest and involvement in the agitation was adequately piqued. The movement undoubtedly had reached a feverous pitch. Darjeelingites brimmed with fervour towards the cause and supported it with a dedication that almost equalled blind faith. A burning passion for the land had kindled the heart of every darjeelingite, and every lip pledged support to give their life if need be for “our maato”.

On 27th of July, 1986, I woke up to the murmurings of an entire village drenched in a carnivalesque mood. Women draped in colourful chowbandi cholos paced the streets with saipatri malas hanging around their neck. Men in daura suruwals and khukuris slung by their sides walked alongside, eager to impress their female counterparts. Every other person, musically challenged or not, sported a beat or two on the madal. Festoons fluttered in the afternoon breeze and shouts of “Jai Gorkha-Jai Gorkhaland” pierced through the ravines and cliffs. On that day, cultural, societal, economic and religious

boundaries seemed to fade and had merged as one. Everyone, be it bahun, rai, limbu, kami or damai spoke with ONE voice, with one purpose, such as, or had never been seen before.

At the heart of all the festivities was a much somber issue. The Indo-Nepal treaty which in a way had sealed the fate of the Nepalese and their status quo in India lay at the heart of this contentious issue. Shrouded in uncertainty, Clause 7 of the treaty came to be synonymous with the ambiguous legal status of the Nepalese living, not only in the Darjeeling Hills but throughout India. Our “Identity” as legal residents of India was in itself brought to question. A mass campaign was therefore organized, to burn the flags of the two countries and to nullify the treaty. Leaders at the local level had planned a non-violent march to the main town square to make their demands heard. It came as a step in the direction to gain an equal footing as rightful, legal, tax-paying citizens of India.

All the hills, from children to adults, from men to women all cried out in rebellion “WE WANT GORKHALAND”

As expected there was a huge turn-out. Processions from all quarters of town with its share of musicians, dancers, men, women and children converged at the main town square roughly around mid-day. But just as they were approaching the police head-quarters someone heard a loud boom. Unaware of what was going on, the crowd continued under the impression the sound was from a firecracker. Then the boom was followed by yet another, then another and yet another loud boom. No one quite knew what was going on, but commotion broke loose as a lady fell to the ground with blood streaming down her temples. As the realization of a cruel reality slowly filtered in, mass hysteria ensued.


Armed forces, unbeknownst to the crowd had crept atop buildings along the road and were firing blindly, mercilessly and ruthlessly at the unarmed crowd below. Women scurried to protect their young ones from flying bullets. Children ran aimlessly even as their fathers were shot down like animals on a firing range. Mothers saw their sons falling by their side, children witnessed blood streaming down the cheeks of their parents. The elderly lay dying by the street, struggling to let go of their last breath. Men attempted to combat the oppressors with bare essentials but to no avail. Every shot fired from a vantage spot gave birth to an orphan or to a widow. In the end, cries for a loved one, cries of loss and cries of pain were drowned among a heap of bodies that lay strewn along the road and hill slopes. Gold ear-rings lay unclaimed by the gutter, sarees lay drenched in blood, a stray pair of sandals lay by the roadside even as its owner lay face down against the hot, hard and rough surface of a blood-stained road. After what seemed like hours of massacre, all that remained were remnants of life or lives that once was, or once could be. Deathly silence crept upon the land, as confusion gave way to mourning. It was a horrid spectacle reminiscent of a scene out of the Crimean war.

The Law of the land or rather the lawlessness behind the action towered above the din of death. Surely no law or an attempt for its justification could legitimize a gruesome act of this magnitude. Our Human rights had been violated. Our Constitutional rights had been violated and ceased from us, but alas who was there to speak for the dead, or rather, who among the living could testify against this gross injustice. Celebration turned to lamentation, laughter to tears and hope to hopelessness. Kalimpong and her children had been murdered, yet, who was there to grieve for the dead or console the living? It was a dark, a very dark period in

Many years have passed since Kalimpong first tasted the bitterness of death. Many years have passed since that fateful day in July when we lost so many of our loved ones to gross injustice. Many years have passed since that black Sunday, yet memories of their painful death stare upon us like an open wound. We have shed many tears since; we have buried many loved ones since, and continue to grapple with the pain inflicted upon us.

Politics and politicians have inevitably forgotten or rather, have chosen to forget the trail of tears that the people have shed. They remain true to their fabric, choosing rather pursue interests that fuel their individual pursuit of fame and fortune.

A massacre of a different kind now looms large amidst us. It is now up to us to remember the price we paid to gain what was rightfully ours. It is up to us to cherish and respect the life and death of those who we once lost. It is up to Kalimpong and her people, to remember and hold onto the hope that was once alive.

Just as the soul of every martyr remains aflame within the pages of our history, so too “Our Story” remains immortal in our psyche: Our Story is worth the memories! 

Dr. Vimal Khawas

# AND THE TEESTA WEEPS....

The Tista, or Teesta River, often regarded as a lifeline of the Darjeeling - Sikkim Himalaya is one of the major rivers flowing along the Eastern Himalayan landscape. It is the fourth major river after the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna in the South Eastern Asian region. The Tista originates in the Sikkim Himalaya as *Chhombo Chhu* from a glacial lake the *Khangchung Chho* at an elevation of 5280 meters in the northeastern corner of the state. The lake lies at the snout of the Tista Khangse glacier descending from Pauhunri peak (7056 m) in a northwestern direction. However, many scholars consider Tista Khangse glacier and *Chho Lhamo* as the source of the Tista. It flows along the entire length of Sikkim and carves out some of the profuse and verdant Himalayan temperate and tropical river valleys. As it flows down, the river forms the border between Sikkim and West Bengal.

The Tista flows about 172 km in the hilly region of Sikkim and Darjeeling (India); the river runs for about 98 km in the plains of West Bengal (India) and another



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134 km in Bangladesh before joining the great Brahmaputra in Bangladesh. The river drains a total geographical area of about 12,159 sq. km. around 2004 sq. km of the basin (or about 17 percent) lies in Bangladesh with the rest of the basin area being in India.

As it traverses from its source to the plains, the Tista receives water from a large number of tributaries on either side of its course forming a complex and dynamic river basin and therefore a unique eco-region fittingly referred to as 'The Tista Eco-region.' The tributaries joining from the eastern flank are shorter in course but larger in number and have lesser volume of discharge whereas the tributaries on the western flank are fewer in number but much longer with larger drainage areas, thus contributing more amount of discharge to the main Tista River. This is so because the right-bank tributaries drain heavily glaciated areas with sources in large snowfields. The left-bank tributaries, on the other hand, originate from semi-permanent and much smaller snowfields as compared to the right bank tributaries.



The Tista River Basin has been home to several social groups in Sikkim, northern West Bengal (India) and Bangladesh since historic past. Starting from the Lepcha Tribe, Ethnic Bhutias and the Ethnic Nepalis in Sikkim-Darjeeling Himalaya to the agrarian communities of North Bengal and Bangladesh, the Tista Basin is the source of livelihood for several socio-cultural groups. Further, the Tista has been the source of ethno-cultural and ethno-religious basis of many social groups in the Darjeeling-Sikkim region. The Tista River is a major and only source of water for agricultural crops of the thirsty Northern Bengal and North Western Bangladesh.

However, the historic symbiotic and intimate human-environment relationship between people and natural resource bases including water in the Tista Basin has been increasingly put to danger by diverse undercurrents of development in recent times. This has resulted in imbalances in the environment and various ecological systems therein. This is a very serious issue both for our coming generations and for us. It is important to understand that all the parameters of the environment are intimately interrelated and a change in one will negatively affect the other.

Besides other forms of development including expansion of agriculture and irrigation, construction of roads and buildings, urbanization etc, the Central and Provincial Governments of India are forcefully underway with series of hydropower dams within the Teesta River Basin (TRB). Consequently, the Sikkim-Darjeeling catchment of the Tista Basin is expected to produce over 6000 MW of electricity within the next few decades.

Ironically, the first Human Development Report (HDR) of Sikkim (2001) authored by Mahendra P Lama, then Economic Advisor to the Chief Minister of Sikkim, strongly advises Sikkim to harness rich water resource of the Sikkim Himalaya. The report further recommends state government to take help of private sector towards this end (page 77-84). The

State Development Report of Sikkim (2008), takes similar stand as taken by HDR, 2001 (page 109-119). Both the reports cite the success of Chukha Project of Bhutan as


an example for the development of hydro resource of Sikkim.

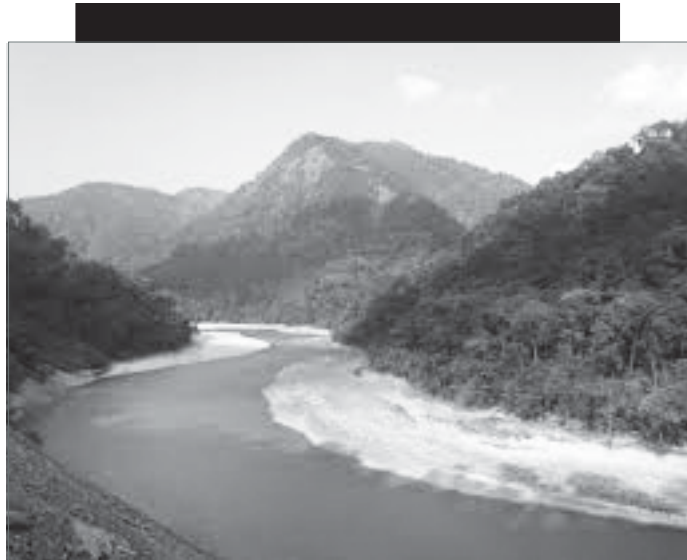
There are concerns that building of Hydro-dams may lead to river-induced seismicity in this geologically young and tectonically active region besides several other environmental, socio-cultural and socio-economic fallouts because of their little scientific basis.

Further, there have been serious issues on the table with regard to sharing of the Tista waters between India and Bangladesh. Besides several existing and proposed hydro-dams in the Sikkim-Darjeeling Catchment, the Government of West Bengal has diverted almost the entire Tista Water via artificial canal at Tista (Gajoldoba) Barrage in Jalpaiguri to irrigate its thirsty North Bengal leaving little or no water for Bangladesh. As a lower

riparian country of the basin, Bangladesh has been regularly voicing its concern for the equitable sharing of the Tista River. But it is still to be achieved despite several meetings between Bangladesh and Indian governments.

Experts often project that the next 10-15 years shall witness depressing intra and inter-State water disputes if policy makers both in India and Bangladesh do not come up with sustainable solutions for the sustainable management and sharing of Tista Water. There is an urgent need to re-look our neighborhood policy!

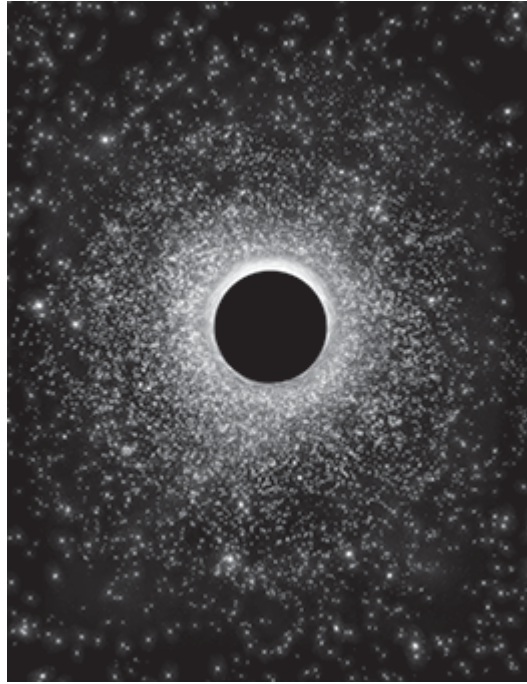
It is sad news for us that the *National Geographic* has listed the Tista River among the eight mighty global rivers that run dry from human overuse. 



**Experts often project that the next 10-15 years shall witness depressing intra and inter-State water disputes if policy makers both in India and Bangladesh do not come up with sustainable solutions for the sustainable management and sharing of Tista Water. There is an urgent need to re-look our neighborhood policy! It is sad news for us that the *National Geographic* has listed the Tista River among the eight mighty global rivers that run dry from human overuse.**

# ARE WE CREATING A BLACK HOLE..

In a recently held Talk Show to which I was privileged to be invited to participate as a speaker, the topic under discussion was "Literature and Politics". The Talk Show was part of a program that was held for the Book launch of a brilliant young man from Teesta. This young man, for a humble background, is now one of the brightest young Politicians as well as Poet in the Darjeeling-Kalimpong region. The program also saw several young Poets and singers entertaining the audience.



acknowledged as the intellectual capital of the region.

So now let me come to the point I want to make. My take on literature is that it has to depict the entire society in the era that the particular literature belongs to. The literature of a particular era must cover the entire cross section of issues that it is being produced in. The entire literature, whether it is poetry or prose or songs or books or in whatever other form, of a particular era cannot or should not be dedicated to just one topic.

The topic of course itself is such a vast one that it surely could not be actually discussed in an hour long Talk Show. This topic is now a hot one under discussion in the literary circles of England, Frances and Germany and the market is now full of books on this topic.

What I want to discuss here is the state of the literature that is being produced in the Hills presently. The quality is of top class. A host of extremely talented young writers like Manoj Bagoti, Tika Bhai, Pradip Lohagun and others have now made Nepali literature in the Hills of Kalimpong something to be taken note of by the Nepali speaking world. Several very gifted poets and essayists have come up too in a big way in Kalimpong. Their works are being regularly published in several forums and several poetry collections have been published too. It is such a proud moment for Kalimpong which always was

In our case it is a fact that almost the entire literature being produced in our times is being dedicated to just one topic- Gorkhaland and the struggle associated with it. Yes, it is the biggest issue in the Hills of Darjeeling and Kalimpong in the present times and a very sentimental one but it surely should not be the only issue that merits the attentions of our literary figures. The Gorkhaland issue surely deserves to dominate all other issues but it should not be allowed to kill them all. The literary figures of today need to answer the generations that will follow us and what answers are we to give them when they demand to know what else or how else life in the Darjeeling Hills was other than the struggle for a separate state?

The issue of a separate state is becoming that huge Banyan tree that does not allow any other thing to grow underneath it.

It is time we prune this Banyan tree in such a way that life under it thrives successfully and the pruning itself gives the Banyan tree a new lease of life. ■

# BELLING THE ROARING TIGER

I write this small piece under much distress and with the full knowledge that a lot of higher ups in the Ruling Political Class of Kalimpong would glare at me with bloodshot eyes the next time they meet me or may even let loose up on me their dirty tricks department sometime in the future. But someone has to address this issue and why should it not be someone like me who somehow still believes (maybe foolishly) that the Pen is mightier than the sword.

What distresses me is the lack of planning specifically in Kalimpong and in general in the entire Hills of Darjeeling. Despite so many development agencies at work there appears to be absolutely no planning or coordination in the way the development agencies are executing their projects. It all appears like a classic case of "Have the mouth and the money so buy a cake" little realizing that the money could have actually bought the more urgently required rice or flour or salt or sugar. There is no Planning agency as such with a holistic plan from the overall development and good of the town. Things are all being done in such a piecemeal manner that despite all the money being pumped into Kalimpong and the Hills in overall, nothing concrete is visible in terms of tangible assets. I get reminded of that poor labour who earns today and eats whatever his money can buy today without giving a thought about tomorrow. Our case is very similar. The moment we receive any funding from either the State or Central Government we construct something randomly without a single thought about tomorrow. The idea is to spend the money somehow as soon as possible before someone else eyes the money. Whether or not that spending actually translates into a useful asset for the town is no one's concern. As long as the contractor can make his money and his bosses make their cut, the money is considered to have been well spent. Chapter closed..

Now the town is abuzz with talk that a flyover will soon be constructed in Kalimpong.. Flyover?? In Kalimpong?? Has anyone seen a flyover in any Hill Station in India?? I have been to almost all major Hill Stations in India and I have not seen any flyover in any Hill station in India. Does Darjeeling have one or does Kurseong have one or does Gangtok have one??? Or for that matter does Nainital or Mussoorie or Simla or Manali have a flyover? I did not notice any flyovers there



during my visits there but then If they hid their flyover while I was there, then of course I would not know.

First and foremost would the terrain allow for the construction of a flyover? No it would not. Would the fact that the Hills of Darjeeling falls in a very high risk seismic zone allow for the construction of flyovers? Even a supreme idiot like me who probably does not know the difference between sand and cement can categorically say that flyovers in a place of such high seismic risks like ours is a sure shot recipe for disaster.

But then why do we need a flyover in Kalimpong? Is it because of the traffic jams that have become a part and parcel of life in Kalimpong? Or is it once again because this large construction project will make a lot of pockets very happy? Let us assume that it is because of the traffic snares. Then again wouldn't it be right to first analyze why the roads of Kalimpong are being choked with traffic? Is it because the roads of Kalimpong are too small for free movement of the existing traffic on the roads? My humble opinion on this is that the roads of Kalimpong are small but not so small that it cannot handle the existing traffic. Towns which have narrower roads than Kalimpong handle more traffic than Kalimpong in a smoother way.

The problem my friends is the parking and not the traffic. If you allow 10 feet of a existing 18 feet road to be occupied by parked cars then if this would not create traffic congestions, what would? There is absolutely no point in changing a still usable car tyre when the engine has gone for a toss. It is high time the powers that be get their thinking correct. Probably even if the flyovers are constructed half of it would be used as a parking lot bringing us back once again to square one.

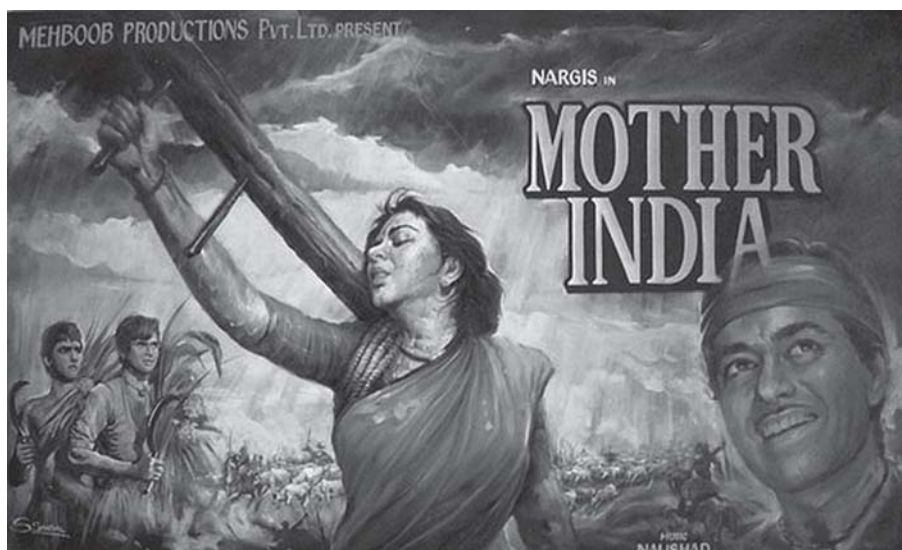
But then, parking and motor syndicates are such a majestically lubricated industry in Kalimpong that many an engines in Kalimpong would stop churning if parking is cleared from the roads of the town.

It remains to be seen who will bell this roaring tiger now. ■



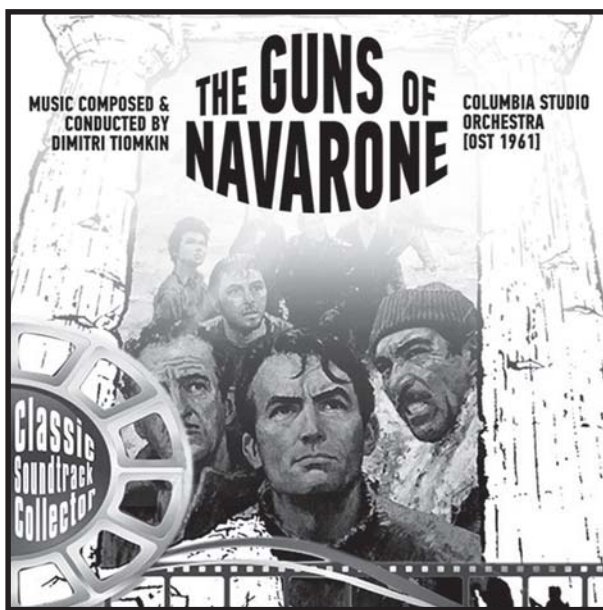
# KANCHAN AND NOVELTY - CINEMA HALLS OF KALIMPONG - A Fading Snapshot

Dr. J S Simick



Kanchan and Novelty had a fond place in the hearts of the people of Kalimpong. Dreams, songs, love, modernity - all these, were found here. For this secluded town, they served as a magical door that opened the wide world beyond the Teesta Bridge.

These two entertainment hubs were situated at the ends of the action area of the town - Damber Chowk, Main Road and Thana Dara. Groups of two or more ambled to and fro along this thoroughfare. Friends and crushes were met many times. The common excuse was to see the "Coming" posters. Long before they were screened, posters of Spartacus, Mughal-e- Azam, Guns of Navarone, Jewel Thief, Mother India, Guide, titillated eager viewers.



"Kanchan" was written vertically on a huge, off-white cement edifice. People from as far as Algarah and Teesta Bazaar were attracted here. A circular fountain with bright lights led the way to a large porch with ticket counters. Novelty also boasted a garden surrounded by a cement parapet just in front of the curved welcoming steps. I once had a glimpse of the owner of Novelty, a fair, elderly man, in snow-white *kurta* and *dhoti*, with a cream shawl over his shoulders.

Parking was never a problem because only a handful of people

had two or four wheelers. It was walking all the way.  
> 0 (11) number > ! < @  
(vehicle) as it was said, was universal.

Tickets Prices : Front Stall - Re. 0.40

Middle Stall - Re. 0.65

Rear Stall - Re. 0.95

Dress Circle - Rs 1.25

Sofa - Rs 2.50

FREE - *Pandrah* August - one patriotic national film, with a song like "*Mera Rang De Basanti Chola*"

On *Haat* days, Wednesdays and Saturdays, to cater to the village people, there was the extra Matinee show at 12 noon. Other days there were the Afternoon (2 pm), Evening (5 pm) and Night (8 pm) shows.

The Stall tickets were sold just before each show. The tickets had to be bought through a hole in a concrete wall that allowed just one fist to pass. Shoving, grinding bodies made mockery of the queue line. Muscular lads from the *bustees*, tussled with the *bazarey* black wallas. The latter were notorious for *raksi* and *chhuri*. One huge ferocious looking man in black *baku* was given the tough task of maintaining order in the Stall counters at Novelty. There were sometimes more live action here, than in the Western movie for which they were clamoring.

Advance tickets for Dress Circle and higher classes, were also available from a shop in Main Road, beside the present SBI ATM. From a solid wooden cash box in a corner of a wide, white *gaddi*, out came the coveted ticket bundle. The tickets were extra thin papers

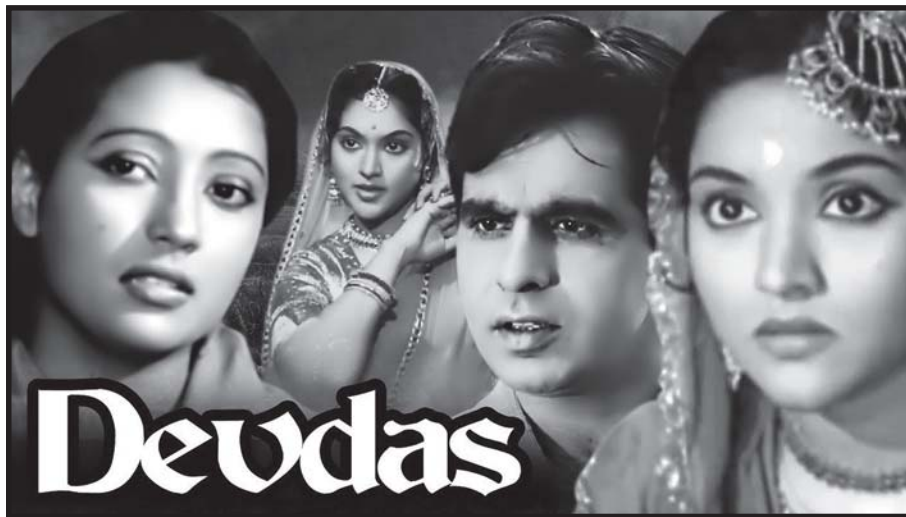
of pink, yellow and green. Seat numbers were scrawled in thick illegible blue or red crayon, which only the usher could read.

Show time meant a darkened hall where the screen ruled supreme. Johnny Walker with his signature pencil moustache and the extra large Tun Tun evoked great cheers. Dilip Kumar, Rajendra Kumar, Shashi Kapoor, Dev Anand, ruled as supreme idols. Raj Kumar was the reticent hero. Nanda, Tanuja, Asha Parekh, Nargis, Nutan, Sadhana with fringe cut hair, Mumtaz with her upturned nose, dimpled Sharmila Tagore, were the ruling divas.

Mala Sinha was special, because of, or in spite of, her roots. Zeenat Aman showed girls how to be socially assertive. Mehmood, I S Johar and Om Prakash evoked quite a lot of laughter. Poor Pran, never was a man more reviled and cursed than him, and how the crowd hated the way he twirled a *biri*

in his smirking mouth. Nirupa Roy was the ultimate mother. All problems on the stage would be solved by the ever so decent Ashok Kumar and A.K. Hangal. Then came Helen, very few could see the perfect artiste beneath her skimpy costume. This cabaret beauty's one dance scene would often be the sole reason for many to buy a ticket. Bald David was the elderly darling with a pivotal role. Shashikala and Lalita Pawar often played negative roles. Balraj Sahni was liked a lot. Kishore

Kumar then, was an actor and not yet a singer. Dara Singh was looked at in awe by fledgling body builders. Simi and schoolboy Rishi did a hill scene in '*Mera Naam Joker*'. After Shammi Kapoor's "*Junglee*" film, screams of





“Yahoo .. ! “ were heard even in distant villages. Raj Kapoor's epic film ‘*Sangam*’ with Vyjayantimala, had Mukesh's hit songs, and stretched to a record long run. The whole town went all crazy with the film ‘*Aradhna*’ where Rajesh Khanna and Sharmila Tagore enacted the song ‘*Mere Sapno Ki Rani Kab Aeyegi Tu*’- complete with *dhaka topi* and toy train.

After watching ‘*Bhoot Bungla*’ and ‘*Woh Kaun Thi*’ one had to act calm while walking in dark lonely places and control the urge to look around and run.

Eyes were wiped, noses blown, and sobs repressed by ladies while watching the orphan boy and his friend in the film ‘*Dosti*’. And Mohammed Rafi's ‘*Jaane Waalo Jara, Murkey Dekho Muje*’ did nothing to stop the tears. All of Lata Mangeshkar's songs were well received. Asha Bhonsle's ‘*Chura Liya Hai Tumne Jo Dil Ko*’ made her another star. Mukesh, Manna Dey, Mahendra Kapoor, had a considerable following.

Madhubala's legendary loveliness bloomed in black and white prints with hardly any photoshopping. It was much later that Eastman color from Kodak, and Technicolor brightened the small screens that later expanded into the grand Cinemascope.

The two duos of Shankar Jaikishan and Laxmikant Pyarelal made a gamut of popular melodies. R D Burman also stood tall. Another duo Salim Javed wrote the memorable dialogues. Sahir Ludhianvi's words in many songs, like ‘*Kabhi Kabhi Mere Dil Mein*’, and ‘*Chalo ek Baar Phir Se*’ enraptured hundreds.

Kalimpong wore a festive look during the screening of ‘*Maiti Ghar*’. Mala Sinha carried the film well. The mystery of ‘*Bik Malai Nirmaya* .. “ still remains.



**The whole town went all crazy with the film ‘*Aradhna*’ where Rajesh Khanna and Sharmila Tagore enacted the song ‘*Mere Sapno Ki Rani Kab Aeyegi Tu*’- complete with *dhaka topi* and toy train.**

**After watching ‘*Bhoot Bungla*’ and ‘*Woh Kaun Thi*’ one had to act calm while walking in dark lonely places and control the urge to look around and run.**

**Eyes were wiped, noses blown, and sobs repressed by ladies while watching the orphan boy and his friend in the film ‘*Dosti*’. And Mohammed Rafi's ‘*Jaane Waalo Jara, Murkey Dekho Muje*’ did nothing to stop the tears.**

Chinky eyed teens, student lamas, elderly ladies in woolens, even taxi drivers, sang with considerable skill the hit songs like ‘*Chandavi ka chaand ho*’ / ‘*Sau saal pehle muje tum se pyaar tha*’ / ‘*Taarif karu mai uski*’. Their Hindi diction and words were perfect. It was remarkable how people in remote mountains, who had

never even been to Siliguri, could relate so closely with the national mainstream.

It was not at all quiet on the western front. The Guns of Navarone’ roared with the screen giants Gregory Peck, Anthony Quinn, and David Niven. Block bookings by schools were done for ‘The Longest Day’. The Austrian mountain slopes showed in ‘The Sound of Music’ were so different from ours. Hill boys loved cowboys and ‘The Magnificent Seven’, ‘The Good the Bad and the Ugly’, ‘They call me Trinity’ were seen multiple times. Charles Bronson, Clint Eastwood, Yul Brynner, Ernst Borgnine, Lee Van Cleef, Eli Wallach, Lee Marvin, Paul Newman, Steve McQueen, - were easily recognized. Drivers and helpers in the Motor Stand could be seen enacting a Laurel and Hardy scene or trying out a Charlie Chapman shuffle. Cliff Richard's ‘The Young Ones’ and ‘Summer Holiday’ were runaway hits. So many people

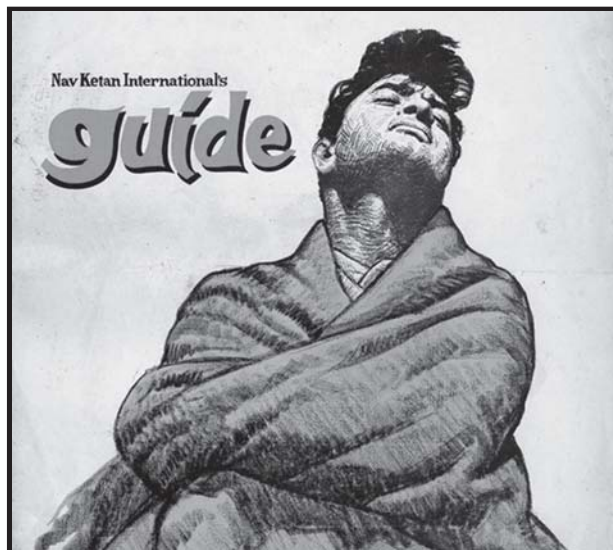
hummed his songs ‘Bachelor Boy’, ‘Travelling Light’ and ‘Evergreen Tree’. Elvis Presley did his unique thing in ‘Jailhouse Rock’. The cartoon ‘Tom and Jerry’ before the main film was eagerly watched. Alfred Hitchcock mesmerized the town with his ‘Dial M for Murder’, ‘The Birds’ and ‘Psycho’. Charlton Heston could never have been replaced as the hero in ‘Ben Hur’, ‘Ten Commandments’ and ‘Planet of the Apes’. Musicals like ‘The West Side Story’ were sparse. Christopher Lee was the quintessential Dracula. From huge framed portraits that lined the staircases, Rock Hudson, Burt Lancaster, Ava Gardner, Sophia Loren, Gina Lollobrigida, Tony Curtis, surveyed the motley crowd with a hint of amusement.



Films could be good or bad, but the extravaganza on offer during the Interval was always exciting and hurried. Long tapering *badam ko khochhi* were bought by nearly everyone. Brown fried *chana* in green *saal ko paat*, adorned the numerous stalls around the hall. *Alu Dum*, reddish yellow, looked tempting. Boiled whole eggs, fried brown, beckoned first timers. *Chhurpi* was widely sold. *Bataarey* and *Khurma* were taken inside the hall. For the seriously hungry there was the *momo*, or *simo*, which had to be gobbled before the bell sounded. ( To get 'phambi' at that time, you would have to zoom 50 years ahead into the future. )

The *Paan Dokaaney's* shop was always crowded. *Suparis*, plain or sweetened, and dried *nariyel*, NP chewing gums, bubble gums stared from inside glass jars. Cigarettes like Scissors, Four Square, Panama, Gold Flake, Cool, Wills filter kings, Charminar, were hurriedly huffed and puffed in the washrooms, in order to be on time for the vital opening scene.

The sensual waterfall girl in the Liril soap advertisement was one of Kalimpong's own. People hurried so as not to miss her clip. When the sound failed, one person from the audience carried



**Fancy jackets, bell-bottoms, Jewel Thief hat, long sideburns, folding umbrellas from Hong Kong, and overcoats and boots - the latest 'in' things were seen in these two halls.**

on with the high notes of the Lifebuoy jingle. The crowd joined vociferously in the Vicco Vajradanti song. Colgate went all out to promote its Hair Oil and Tooth Powder. Different beauties and hunks paraded Lux, Palmolive, Binaca, Keo Karpin, Himalayan Snow Cream. One grandmother stubbornly refused to return home without buying , a bar of 501 Soap she had just seen being advertised.

Fancy jackets, bell-bottoms, Jewel Thief hat, long sideburns, folding umbrellas from Hong Kong, and overcoats and boots - the latest 'in' things were seen in these two halls.

And unlike in Facebook, here you bumped into real-time, flesh and blood beings with whom a host of emotions were expressed in the brief "Hello" before the screen took over.

Wrinkled and forsaken now, Kanchan and Novelty were pretty maidens, once upon a time in Kalimpong... ■



**Eat the Carot with this fork....**

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# CAUSES OF DRYING SPRINGS IN DARJEELING HILLS AND THEIR REVIVAL



Yamuna Chettri

Springs are classified according to the conditions under which water flows through them. Some surface under pressure, while others do as a result of discontinuities in the strata that hold the water underground. For instance, in a seepage or filtration the spring water percolates from many small

openings in porous ground, while in fractured springs water comes from the joints or fractures in solid rocks.

Aquifers are of two types:

- (1) Confined aquifers
- (2) Unconfined aquifers

Confined aquifers are found between two permeable soil layers. This means that the water coming into the ground does not flow directly into or out of the aquifer, as the soil around it does not allow much water to pass through.

Unconfined aquifers are found underneath permeable soil layer so water easily trickles through the ground into the aquifers and they wouldn't be filled with water if they

are not constantly get recharged

People of hills considered dharas as sacred and some dharas are also called "Devasthan" (place where goddess resides) and are protected from human interference to keep it clean and serene. Dharas is that physical aspect which has great significance in our folk culture. We see many Dharas in our Darjeeling hills and they are the lifeline of hill dwellers providing us water for household use to agricultural use, we hills people are totally dependent on Dharas for water supply. Drying up of mountaineous springs is adversely affecting the life of people in hills. Peoples are forced to go long distance to fetch drinking water. Drying up springs source is a serious concern in Darjeeling hills



**W**ater is a primary resource, without water we cannot think of life and springs are the life giving source of water to the hill dwellers. Mountainous springs or locally known as Dhara and it is the natural renewable source found mainly in hilly terrain. Etymologically the word spring comes from German word 'SPRINGER' meaning 'to leap from the ground'. Spring may be defined as a place where a natural outflow of groundwater occurs. Spring water usually fed from sand or gravel water bearing soil formation called aquifers, or a water flow through fissured rocks. Where solid or clay layers block the underground flow of water, it is forced upwards to the surface.

.The rate of natural springs drying is so rapid and we are the ideal spectator of the situation.

There are many factors which are responsible for drying up of mountainous springs:

- Catchment degradation is identified as the main factor of drying springs. Rapid rate of urbanization and jungles of concrete has increased due to which water is unable to infiltrate downwards, as a consequence spring water do not get recharged properly.
- Due to the impact of climate change weather has become unpredictable and erratic, the precipitation patterns such as rise in intensity of rainfall, marked decline in the winter rainfall, drying of spring may be felt across Darjeeling hills.
- Shrinking in the pattern of monsoon is also a factor which adds to lower rate of water table recharge.
- Construction of metalled roads in hills rainwater fails to percolate down because of that aquifers in those areas will not get required amount of water. Due to lesser amount of water seepage in sufficient water will accumulate in aquifers because of which many perennial springs of earlier times have become seasonal.
- Another cause of drying spring is reckless cutting of trees and clearing of vegetation cover in recharging area of spring. we can say deforestation is a primary cause of rapidly drying of springs
- Geologically Himalayan hills are not stable and prone to tectonic events because of which aquifer tends to change their course of flow.

As we know, if there is a problem there is a solution for it too. We can overcome the water crisis in Darjeeling hills by adopting some of the mitigating measures suggested below:

- Firstly, we have to start conserving our springs which is renewable and rechargeable resource from its depletion.
- The immediate area of the spring should be fenced to avoid any kind of disturbance in its source.
- Anthropogenic activities should be totally banned on spring recharging areas.
- Conservation of vegetation cover in the recharging area of a spring is the primary need of an hour. If we fail to do so we will not get to see any springs in the Darjeeling hills in near future
- To identify the recharging belt of a spring and to stop cementing and pitching the recharging area.
- Planting bushy shrubs which have high water holding capacity like banana plant, fig tree etc. Try to keep good shadow of trees in the recharging belt.
- Avoid planting large trees in the spring area, as the roots of the trees penetrate through the rocks facilitating the water accumulating in the aquifers downward
- Conservation of forest and vegetation is a must if we are to revive our drying springs.
- The local self government should come up with Dhara or springs protection programmes or spring shed protection like our neighbouring state Sikkim. The government had already notified 90 Dharas for protection and development under “**Dhara Vikash**”program.

So, in a nutshell climate change and other anthropogenic activities drying of springs is seen in hills of Darjeeling. Reviving our dried out springs is the need of an hour if we fail to conserve our natural springs which is the primary source of water for people living rugged and undulating terrain of hills. Dharas are a part of our folk culture and society if all Dharas or springs in hills are dried out our folk culture will be at stake. Dharas play a significant role in Hilly folk culture and we have many folk songs which tell us about our folk culture related with our Dharas. We have to come together and join our hands to revive our springs. The masses should be aware and have to come forward for the conservation of the springs. **“The wars of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be fought over water” (ISMAIL SERAGELDIN).** Therefore before arising such situation we have to work cautiously. 🏡



# TENZING NORGAY SHERPA

## The Mountain Lion

By Privat Giri

Almost all the Nepalis who live in India, at least once in their lifetime, do encounter the question on their nationality. Due to the similarity of language and culture with the Nepalis of Nepal, the Nepalis of India have always been misrecognised as citizens of Nepal. The non-recognition of the Nepalis of India as Indians has largely shaped the identity crisis faced by the Indian Nepalis. This is one of the fundamental reasons why the Nepalis in India have been increasingly asserting their Indian identity in the form of the separate state of Gorkhaland since the early 20th century. This is also the reason why the Nepalis of India preferably identify themselves as 'Gorkhas' and not Nepalis.

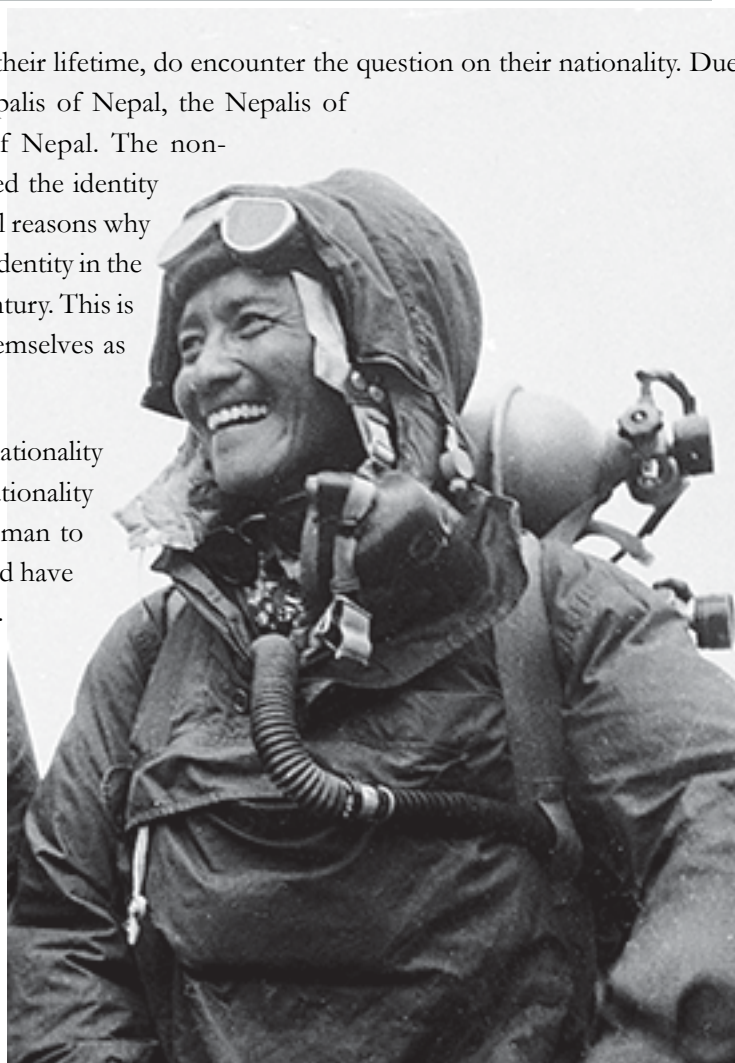
The legendary Tenzing Sherpa is no exception. He too faced the nationality question immediately after his Everest ascent. And his was the nationality no ordinary. It was the question of the nationality of the first man to ascent the highest point on earth. And the choice and decision did have consequences as you will come to know as you read through. However, the case of Tenzing was different and interesting.

Unlike the normal Nepali folks of India who have to time and again fight for his/her Indian nationality and assert the same, here, it was India and Nepal both asserting Tenzing's identity on their respective behalf. This article attempts give you the small glimpse of Tenzing's life after Everest. The following account of Tenzing's life is taken from 'Man of Everest: The Autobiography of Tenzing' by James Ramsey Ullman and 'Tenzing and the Sherpas of Everest' by Judy & Tashi Tenzing.

Tenzing Sherpa was born in Nepal but was an Indian citizen. He lived in Darjeeling since 1932. He climbed Everest in the year 1953.

After reaching the top of Everest, Tenzing and Hillary stayed there for almost fifteen minutes. Hillary took photographs of Tenzing holding aloft the flags of Great Britain, Nepal, the UN and India and started descending. Upon descent, at the place called Dolalghat, a crowd of his fans from Kathmandu came to meet him and tore him away from rest of the expedition and compelled him to sign an agreement that he is a citizen of Nepal. The King of Nepal himself had presented Tenzing with the 'Nepal Pratap Bardhak Medal' a year before when he and Lambert nearly reached the top of Everest during the Swiss expedition.

The expedition soon reached Kathmandu where the King of Nepal awarded Tenzing with 'Nepal Tara', the highest decoration in the country and offered Tenzing and his family to use the royal jet for their ongoing travel to Kolkota. The Prime Minister of Nepal then even offered Tenzing a house along with rewards and benefits if he decided to stay in Nepal.



However, Nehru soon became Tenzing's greatest supporter. India who had recently got independence had a great deal to gain from the promotion of Tenzing as a national hero. Nehru also took Tenzing to his home, gave him a number of fine clothing from his personal dressing room for use at formal receptions in England. He gave Tenzing two small pieces of jewellery which had belonged to his father. Nehru even wrote a letter to Dr. B.C Roy, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal, asking him to help Tenzing raise funds for a good home for Tenzing.

After returning from England, Nehru offered Tenzing the position of Director of Field Training as the so called 'job of life' and officially opened Himalayan Mountaineering Institute in the autumn of 1954.

When Tenzing attained the age of retirement in 1976 he was told to leave his HMI post. He was very unhappy with the decision and tried to convince the Director of HMI to retain him in his position claiming that Nehru had promised him the 'post for life' but in vain. However, there was nothing in writing regarding Tenzing's tenure other than a verbal agreement by Nehru who was no more. Tenzing had actually retained Indian citizenship, although he had many offers from many other countries- Nepal, the Swiss, the Americans. Finally, he was kept back by the HMI as an adviser that became purely nominal and his salary and role remained low.

It was only after the coming of Lars-Eric Lindblad, a successful tour operator, to Darjeeling, the fortune of Tenzing changed a little. Lindblad helped Tenzing establish his own trekking and touring company in Darjeeling and used him as a promotional centerpiece for his tours. Tenzing had a new purpose to live again and was finally able to build some wealth. However, it is said that Tenzing became increasingly disillusioned and unhappy and not in very positive state of mind.

Hillary recounted of Tenzing carrying the pain of his retirement from HMI when he later met him. He seemed to be unable to fully purge this resentment and anger.

In November 1985, Tenzing made his last journey to Switzerland, staying in Geneva with Raymond and Annette Lambert and spending time with his dear friend Annelies Sutter in Zurich. The Lamberts and Sutter were taken aback at the first sight of him, for he had become gaunt and his eyes had lost their distinctive sparkle. His famous smile had faded away. Maria Feuz arranged for him to have a complete medical checkup. The examining doctor later reported that the tests did not find any significant pathological findings. It would seem his troubles were in his mind and his heart.

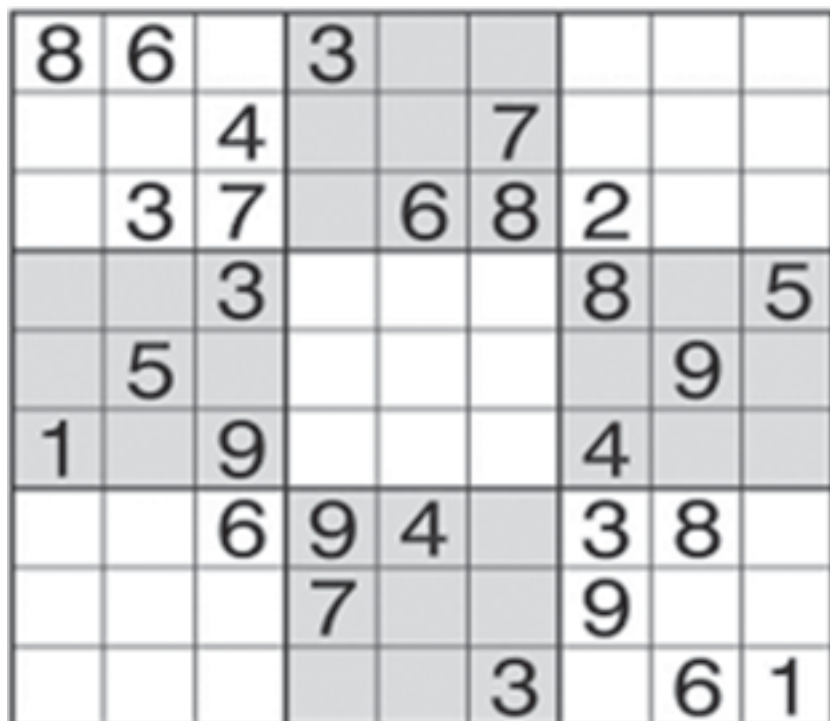
On Friday morning, 9 May, at 4 am, Tenzing aged 71 then fell severely ill and breathed his last breath. His cremation was done at HMI.

Hillary was the only foreigner present, for it was a time of great political tension in Darjeeling because of Gorkhaland Movement.

Tenzing symbolized the best that humanity had to offer, a simple hearted hero who not only conquered mountains but also hearts world over. However, the nation he chose to adopt as his homeland, a young India that he has so inspired, is yet to give him due recognition. If anyone is more deserving of Bharat Ratna, its Tenzing – for he inspired generations of Indians to dream big and make those dreams come true.

Privat Giri is the Asst Prof of Journalism and Mass Communications at Salesian College in Sonada.

## SUDOKO



## WORLD CUP QUIZ

1. What kind of animal is Fuleco, the mascot for FIFA World Cup 2014?
2. Brazil has the most number of World Cup titles to its credit. How many times has it won the World Cup so far?
3. In which year was the football World Cup held for the first time?
4. Which country won the first football World Cup?
5. Paul, a marine creature, which supposedly predicted the outcome of many matches in World Cup 2010 was a/an?
6. In which country is FIFA World Cup 2018 scheduled to be played?
7. To which country does the famous player Ronaldo, who held the record for most number of World Cup goals, belong?
8. In which country are the headquarters of FIFA (International Federation of Association Football) located?
9. Who has the record for scoring the most goals in World Cup history?
10. Who of the following won the World Cup both as the captain and coach of his country's team?

## IDENTIFY THIS GREAT GORKHA PERSONALITY

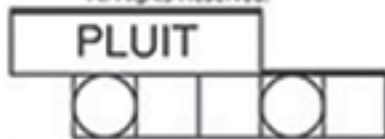


## JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



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www.jumble.com



THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME  
by Mike Argirion and Jeff Knurek



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.



# poems

By Rachel Heffington

## A Duel

Long ago in a valley green,  
Where a thriving hamlet once had been  
Was a rubb-ly castle, hidden well  
By maples tall, in a shady dell.  
The penants, fluttery once, and gay,  
Now hung in shreds- a faded gray;  
The tower was crumbly, the dias leaked,  
And in the dungeon the mouses squeaked.  
Now, Squire Cliff and Baron Bim,  
(Both plum full of peppery vim)  
Engaged in a duel on the weedy lawn  
As the edge of night gave way to dawn.  
The Baron, (insulted) and the Squire (quite red  
With anger) their stout hearts quivered with dread.  
None wanted to fight, they dallied and stalled,  
“3 Paces!” which words their courage dulled.  
But neither would give it up as a joke-  
“What we need s’for Bim (th’old Baron) to choke!”  
The sun had climbed higher, now quite in the sky,  
They drew swords and poised, “Hark! Where comes that cry?!?!”  
Repeated! And from the dell came a maid,  
With basket and blanket, their arms she stayed-  
“Kind Squire! Good Baron! You mustn’t fast!  
Come, bury the hatchet, enjoy this repast!  
Reluctant, but grateful, each laid down his arms,  
Exploring instead, a beef-pasty’s charms.  
They kissed and made up o’er a cup o’ darjeeling,  
And surely there was quite a brotherly feeling.  
And so the adage shall henceforth be,  
“All’s well that ends with a cup of tea!”

# Doma Wang

## FORTUNE FAVOURS THE BRAVE

10 QUESTIONS

Himalayan Times asks Doma Wang 10 questions on her life and work. Her transformation from a typical St. Joseph's Convent girl from Kalimpong into one of the most popular food personalities in Kolkata has been nothing short of spectacular. From owning and managing a chain of restaurants in Kolkata to appearing on TV Food shows to speaking in Food Events, Doma is now one of the most celebrated personalities in the Food industry of Kolkata and her struggle has been of epic proportions. It has not been as easy as "*Khul ja Shim Shim*" although Shim Shim is the name of one of her more famous restaurants- A veritable house of treasures!!

More importantly she still has her feet firmly on the ground. Her love for Kalimpong and her readiness to provide assistance to students or patients or even just casual visitors from the Hills to Kolkata, makes her someone whom Kalimpong is immensely proud of. She truly is a shining example for the youths of these Hills..



1. How /why did you journey from Kalimpong to Kolkata ?

I was born and brought up in Kalimpong. After my ICSE in the year 1984, I joined Loreto College, Darjeeling. Due to the political unrest in the Darjeeling hills, I decided not to continue there and so went to Kolkata and then onwards to Taiwan for higher studies. During my stay in Kolkata I met my future husband and came back to marry him and therefore settled in Kolkata

2. Please tell us about your years of struggle and the difficulties you faced, and how you overcame them ?

I was working for a Japanese company when my first daughter Sachiko was born. The company wanted me to relocate to Bihar and since I did not want to bring up my child there, I decided to quit. The

idea of a home delivery service for Chinese and Tibetan food was conceived and in the year 1993, I started "Wangs Takeaway" from our home in Salt Lake City, Kolkata. Shopping , cutting , chopping , cooking , packing , delivering food to people on my kinetic Honda with some assistance from my man Friday, Somu, was indeed a Herculean task but somehow I managed and soon my business flourished . The initial days were difficult , long hours , uncertainty, cooking in the heat of Kolkata ..those were tough days but people loved the food I served and "Wangs Takeaway" soon became a household name in salt lake. Later I got the opportunity to open my first restaurant "The Blue Poppy" in Sikkim house.

3. How difficult was it for a small town girl to go to Kolkata, set up your business and then make it succeed ?

For a young small town girl like me, to go to Kolkata and set up a business was definitely not easy. The main struggle was working long

hours in the immense heat and humidity and not being able to spend time with my children. Language was also a barrier. Waking up in the wee hours of the morning, looking for fresh produce, carrying heavy bags of vegetables and meat, all these and more were not easy for a simple girl from the hills. But with hard work, dedication and the passion That I had for cooking, I have made it so far in the city of joy, Kolkata. Procuring local ingredients was also a challenge. My food has always been about simple soul food and people have always appreciated it.

4. You were a St. Joseph's Convent (SJC) girl. What plus did SJC give you that helped you to succeed ?

The nuns and teachers of my school, St. Joseph's Convent Kalimpong, along with my late father were instrumental in making me what I am today. They taught me to be kind and compassionate, they taught me that there was no substitute for hard work. I was taught to be honest and to listen to my conscience. I would like to





mention here a very special person in my life, Sister Tarcisius, who has been my inspiration in all my growing up years in SJC.

5. Tell us about your chain of restaurants.

I started with the Blue Poppy Sikkim House, Middleton Street about 14 years ago, followed by one in Salt Lake. I then started The Blue Poppy Express at Lake Town, and now we also have Shim Shim in Park Circus and the Blue Poppy Thakali in Middleton street. We're working on opening a few more branches in various parts of Kolkata city .

6. What memories of Kalimpong do you hold and cherish ?

I have some pretty mixed feelings about my hometown Kalimpong. my early memories are of a small town full of happy people. I remember every morning walking to school in the crisp clear air of Kalimpong with the view of the Himalayas on my right. The weekly trips to watch movies at Kanchan and Novelty after wrestling for tickets at the counter with the likes of Telu and other black marketers was an adventure in its self. Eating *alu* and *phangbi* on the roadside stalls was such

a joy! And small things like eating *rasmalai* at Narayan Das, or buying a comic at Himalayan Stores gave me so much happiness. I could go on and on about the memories of my childhood in my hometown ...

7. I am told you have about 40 youths from the hills working for you. How do you feel giving back to the place that you were born and brought up in?

I am indeed blessed to be able to provide employment to many people from the Darjeeling hills. At the moment, I have more than fifty boys working for my restaurants. It gives me a sense of pride to see these young boys trying to learn the ropes and doing a fine job at it. I plan to open many more outlets and create more job opportunities for the people of the hills



provided they are willing to work hard and learn to love what they do. A happy worker can create magic in the kitchen and that's the key ingredient for a successful business.

8. You also are involved in helping students or patients or just common people from the Hills whenever they are in any need of help in Kolkata. Tell us about this noble endeavour of yours.

The sense of being lost in a big city where everything is new is something I have experienced. Having lived in Kolkata for over three decades I now consider myself a part

of this wonderful city. Having said that I also feel the pain of the people of the Darjeeling hills, the patients who come to see doctors , the students who come for higher education, even the youngsters who come looking for employment . Am blessed to be able to help some people in whatever little way I can. There are many people like me in Kolkata from my hometown, who are always willing to help those in need. Leorina Shah among others has always gone out of the way to support me in helping our people. I would take this opportunity, to offer help to anyone needing any assistance here in Kolkata. Please feel free to get in touch.

9. Tell us of your future plans for your chain of restaurants. I believe you will be shortly going national ?

The Blue Poppy has received various awards for excellence in Tibetan and Chinese cuisine and we have plans to open many new outlets in Kolkata and other cities in India. This is possible now because I have my children and my cousin Diki to help me. Also the support and love of all my friends and well-wishers. I would love to give the people of this country a taste of authentic food from the hills of Darjeeling. Tibetan, Chinese and Nepali food has now become a rage and it's now time to promote our cuisine.

10. What is your message to the youths of the Darjeeling Hills ?

My message to the youth of the hills is that there is no substitute for hard work and that they should believe in the dignity of labour. No work is below our dignity as long as we do not do anything to hurt anyone . As long as you can go to bed at the end of the day knowing that you made a lot of people happy today and you hurt no one .... I have heard a lot of people talking about unemployment in the hills. It just takes a little guts and loads of dedication and hard work .....Just go out and grab the opportunities. Fortune favours the brave .....





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